

Amendments to the Drawings:

The attached sheet of drawings includes changes to the sheet including Figs.

4-5. In particular, Fig. 5 has been deleted.

Attachment: Replacement Sheet

Annotated Sheet Showing Changes

Remarks/Arguments

Reconsideration of the above-identified application in view of the present amendment is respectfully requested. By the present amendment, claims 7 and 17 have been amended.

Examiner Interview

The Applicants wish to thank the Examiner for the courtesies extended during the telephone interview of November 26, 2008. In the interview, the Examiner suggested that the Applicant delete Fig. 5 and amend the claims such that the base is not positively recited in order to overcome drawing and specification objections regarding the base. Furthermore, the Examiner suggested that the specification be amended to clarify which structure the Applicant regards as the "at least one engagement element" of the inner and outer sleeves recited in the claims.

Drawings

The Examiner objected to the drawings under 37 C.F.R. §1.83(a) for failing to show every feature of the invention specified in the claims. In particular, the drawings were objected to for failing to illustrate a "base", "at least one engagement element [of the inner sleeve]", "at least one engagement element on the outer sleeve" and the "plurality of engagement elements".

As noted, the claims were amended to recite the base inferentially and the figures were amended to remove any illustration of the base. Accordingly, it is believed that the objection regarding the base has been overcome.

Regarding the at least one engagement elements, it is respectfully submitted that the current figures illustrate these features. The at least one engagement

element of the inner sleeve recited in lines 11-12 of claim 7 is illustrated at element 14 in Figs. 1 and 4 and described as guide recesses 14 formed on the outer wall of the inner sleeve 11 (page 3, lines 24-26). The at least one engagement element of the outer sleeve recited in lines 12-13 of claim 7 is illustrated at element 20 in Fig. 4 and described as guide projections 20 formed on the inner wall of the outer sleeve 10 (page 4, lines 22-24). Furthermore, the specification has been amended to clarify these interpretations and, thus, it is respectfully submitted that the objection of the recitation of at least one engagement element of the inner and outer sleeves has been overcome.

Regarding the plurality of engagement elements recited in claim 8, it is respectfully submitted that the current figures illustrate these features. A plurality of engagement elements 14 of the inner sleeve 11 and the plurality of engagement elements 20 of the outer sleeve recited are both illustrated in Fig. 4. Furthermore, as noted, the specification has been amended to clarify these interpretations and, thus, it is respectfully submitted that the objection of the recitation of a plurality of engagement elements has been overcome.

Claim Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §102

Claims 7, 8, 12-14, 16, and 17 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 4,304,148 to Hamman (hereafter "Hamman"). That rejection is respectfully traversed.

Amended claim 7 recites a carrier part for holding cable. A first connecting unit includes a sleeve connected to the carrier part. A second connecting unit includes a guide part connected to the carrier part and a holding part releasably

engageable with the guide part for connecting the carrier part to a base. An outer sleeve of the guide part has a guide cavity having a cross section that is longer in the longitudinal direction than in the transverse direction. The longitudinal and transverse directions are orthogonal to one another. The inner sleeve is inserted into the outer sleeve along the transverse direction of the outer sleeve for connecting the carrier part to the base. The inner sleeve is displaceable relative to the outer sleeve in the longitudinal direction when the inner sleeve is engaged with the outer sleeve.

Hamman does not teach or suggest a second connecting unit that includes a guide part connected to a carrier part and a holding part releasably engageable with the guide part. The Examiner asserts that element 20 constitutes such a guide part and element 60 constitutes such a holding part. The Applicant disagrees. The point 20 and tubular extension 60 are portions of the stud portion 12 and head portion 14, respectively. In production, the stud portion 12 is injection molded and subsequently insert molded within the head portion 14 (Col. 2, lines 61-65). Due to this construction, the tubular extension 60 intimately and virtually integrally joins and mates with the abrupt shoulder 34 on the cylindrical body 16 of the stud portion 12 (Col. 3, lines 11-13 and Fig. 3). Two pieces insert molded together and, thus, integrally joined together, are not releasably engageable with one another. Accordingly, Hamman does not teach or suggest a second connecting unit including a guide part connected to a carrier part and a holding part releasably engageable with the guide part.

Furthermore, Hamman does not teach or suggest an outer sleeve having a cross section that is longer in the longitudinal direction than in the transverse direction, an inner sleeve being inserted into the outer sleeve along the transverse direction of the outer sleeve. As noted, the stud portion 12 and the head portion 14 are insert molded together. Accordingly, no portion of the stud portion 12 is inserted in any direction into the head portion 14. Regardless, claim 7 requires that the inner sleeve be inserted into the outer sleeve along the shorter, i.e., transverse, cross section. In the case of the bore 30 of Hamman, the shorter cross section is across the diameter of the bore, as opposed to the depth of the bore. It is clearly impossible to insert the head portion 14 into the stud portion 12 along the direction of the diameter of the bore 30. Therefore, Hamman does not teach or suggest an outer sleeve having a cross section that is longer in the longitudinal direction than in the transverse direction, an inner sleeve being inserted into the outer sleeve along the transverse direction of the outer sleeve.

Moreover, Hamman does not teach or suggest an inner sleeve that is displaceable relative to an outer sleeve in the longitudinal direction when the inner sleeve is engaged with the outer sleeve. As noted, the stud portion 12 and the head portion 14 are insert molded together and, thus, there is no relative movement of any kind between the tubular extension 60 and the cylindrical body 16. Accordingly, Hamman does not teach or suggest an inner sleeve that is displaceable relative to an outer sleeve in the longitudinal direction when the inner sleeve is engaged with the outer sleeve. For these reasons, it is respectfully submitted that amended claim 7 is patentable over Hamman and therefore allowable.

Claim 8 recites that the at least one engagement element on the inner sleeve includes a plurality of engagement elements and the at least one engagement element on the outer sleeve includes a plurality of engagement elements. Hamman does not teach or suggest this structure. Hamman teaches that a stud portion 12 is insert molded within a head portion 14 via a single shoulder ring 32 within the tubular extension of the flange 42 of the head portion (Fig. 3). Hamman, therefore, teaches that a single element interconnects the head portion 14 and the stud portion 12 during insert molding. Accordingly, Hamman does not teach or suggest an inner sleeve and an outer sleeve that each have a plurality of engagement elements. For these reasons, it is respectfully submitted that claim 8 is patentable over Hamman and therefore allowable.

Claim 12 depends from claim 7 and is allowable for at least the same reasons as claim 7 and for the specific limitations recited therein.

Claim 13 recites that the first connecting unit further includes a displaceable holding part releasably engageable with the sleeve, whereby the longitudinal direction of the holding part of the first connecting unit is parallel to the longitudinal direction of the holding part of the second connecting unit. Hamman does not teach or suggest this structure. The Examiner asserts that element 90 – a sealing washer – constitutes such a holding part. The washer 90, however, is interposed between the flange 42 of the head portion 14 and the workpiece 82 (Fig. 3) and, thus, does not engage the sheath member 70 at all. Accordingly, Hamman does not teach or suggest a displaceable holding part releasably engageable with a sleeve.

Furthermore, Hamman does not teach or suggest that the longitudinal direction of a holding part of a first connecting unit is parallel to a longitudinal direction of a holding part of a second connecting unit. In Hamman, every element of the retaining member 10, i.e., the stud portion 12, head portion 14, sheath member 70, sealing washer 90, sealing member 110, and sealing member 110 all extend longitudinally along the same axis. That is, all elements of the retaining member 10 are co-axial – not parallel. Parallel is defined as “lying in the same plane but never meeting no matter how far extended” (Random House Unabridged dictionary, 2006). Clearly, elements that are co-axial, i.e., always meet, are not elements that lie in the same plane but never meet no matter how far extended. For these reasons, it is respectfully submitted that claim 13 is patentable over Hamman and therefore allowable.

Claim 14 recites that the holding part and guide part cooperate to adapt to positional and dimensional errors in the second connecting unit. Hamman does not teach or suggest this structure. The Examiner relies on MPEP §2112.01 in presuming that the retaining member 10 in Hamman is inherently capable of adapting to positional and dimensional errors. According to MPEP §2112.01, however, claimed properties or functions are presumed to be inherent in the reference only when the structure in the reference is substantially identical to that of the claims. As noted, the stud portion 12 and the body portion 14 of Hamman are not substantially identical to the holding part and the guide part of the present invention. Accordingly, Hamman is not inherently capable of adapting to positional and dimensional errors.

Regardless, the retaining member 10 of Hamman does not adapt to positional and dimensional errors, and the Examiner has not pointed to any structure of the retaining member that purports to do so. For these reasons, it is respectfully submitted that claim 14 is patentable over Hamman and therefore allowable.

Amended claim 17 recites that a device including a carrier part that defines a cable channel for receiving a cable or tube. The device includes a first connecting unit comprising a sleeve connected to the carrier part and a second carrier connecting unit. The second connecting unit comprises a guide part connected to the carrier part and a holding part releasably engageable with the guide part.

As noted, Hamman does not teach or suggest a guide part connected to the carrier part and a holding part releasably engageable with the guide part. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that amended claim 17 is patentable over Hamman and therefore allowable.

Claim Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §103

Claims 9-11 and 15 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Hamman. Claims 9-11 and 15 depend from claim 7 and are allowable for at least the same reasons as claim 7 and for the specific limitations recited therein.

In view of the foregoing, it is submitted that the application is in condition for allowance and allowance is respectfully requested.

Please charge any deficiency or credit any overpayment in the fees for this amendment to our Deposit Account No. 20-0090.

Respectfully submitted,

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